

Mary Lou Terrien

From: eric.kehoe@gmail.com on behalf of Eric Kehoe <erickehoe@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 11:41 AM
To: Mary Lou Terrien
Subject: Re: House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720

I am writing to urge support for Public Act 169, the Local Historic Districts Act of 1970 by rejecting House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720.

Michigan relies on current state law, PA 169 of 1970, to protect significant historic resources from inappropriate alterations, incompatible new construction and development pressures that often result in demolition. It does so by enabling local governments to safeguard their historic resources by creating local historic districts.

Proposed amendments House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720 would completely undermine the power of the local historic designation process and administration to effectively protect Michigan's heritage by:

- * Requiring that two-thirds of property owners within a proposed district boundary consent to establishing a local historic district AND that the general public vote in favor. This would create unprecedented barriers to local communities' ability to protect their local landmarks in the future. The current process already incorporates property owner and public input through meetings, workshops and public hearings.
- * Stipulating that local historic districts be affirmed through a public vote every 10 years. Not only is this inefficient, it would be costly to a local government in terms of staff time and community education efforts. Unjustly, the reverse process--dissolving a local historic district--would not require such petitioning or voting, allowing local legislative bodies to eliminate a district without guidelines or justification and without community input.

For these reasons, and several others, House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720 should be resoundingly rejected. These bills would weaken protections for historic resources and threaten the viability of local historic districts in Michigan. Our historic places and neighborhoods are simply too important to allow this to happen.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mr. Eric Kehoe
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